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Slovakia

Biotechnology

Status of Biotech Regulations

2003

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Report Highlights:

Regulations on agricultural biotechnology in the Slovak Republic are very similar to EU regulations. After the anticipated EU accession in May 2004, Slovakia will implement all EU regulations regarding biotechnology. So far there are no field releases of biotech varieties in Slovakia but one approved biotech-soybean variety for food and feed purposes.

Includes PSD Changes: No
Includes Trade Matrix: No
Unscheduled Report
Vienna [AU1]
[LO]

Regulations:

Act No. 151 of 19 February 2002 on use of genetic technologies and genetically modified organisms entered into force in April 1, 2002 with transition time to March 30. Presently it is in full power, as well as the Decree No. 252 of the Ministry of Environment of the Slovak Republic of April 30 2002, implementing the Act on use of genetic technologies and genetically modified organisms, which came into force as of June 1. Both documents were created on the base of EU directives 98/83/EEC and 18/2001/EEC. Mentioned Act and Decree are the umbrella for other specific acts (on seeds, food, medicines and welfare).

Approval of agricultural biotechnology products for imports and sales:

Article 17 of Act No. 151 describes the mandatory approval of imported genetically modified organisms or sales under the Act for deliberate release into environment. This procedure is similar to EU regulations: the applicant has to fulfill an application form (available on the web-site of the Ministry of Environment) and ask for approval. If the product is a food product containing GMOs and derivatives, it has also to be approved by the Ministry of Health. After the EU accession of the Slovak Republic (SR) (scheduled for May 2004) EU regulations will be implemented into the national law and the approving process will be the same as in other EU countries. There is already one GM-soybean variety approved for food and feed purposes (not for seed) in the SR.

Monitoring and Enforcement Authorities:

Ministry of Environment

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Ministry of Agriculture

Section of agriculture, food and market

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Ministry of Health

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Slovak republic

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Monitoring and enforcement:

Agricultural products are tested by the Central Institute for Testing and Controls in Agriculture, food products are tested by State Veterinary and Food Inspection. Penalties are assigned up to 5 millions Slovak Crowns (This has not been applied so far). A traceability system for agricultural products is in preparation. If GMO products are approved for placing into the market, it is obligatory to label them with "may contain", as it is in other EU countries. In-country field tests are required. After Slovakia joined the EU marketing of agricultural biotech products is free within the EU. If there will be any imports only to the SR (from outside the EU) field tests and registration of the variety will still have to be done. The application process is the same as for the EU. The application form is implemented (translated) from EU directive 18/2001/EEC.

Labeling:

Foods containing the products of agricultural biotechnology must be labeled. The threshold now is 1% of adventitious presence now. This will be changed shortly to the EU level of 0.9%. The text on the label has to be "this product contains GMOs" or "this product is made from GMO's". The text must be printed in the same font size as the text explaining the composition of the food product. All levels of food products must carry a label. There is no regulation on the use of labels such as "biotech-free", "non-biotech", etc., but labels of this kind may be used.